

VZCZCXYZ0004

OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAK #2336/01 2561442

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

O 131442Z SEP 07

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3737

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002336

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

FOR P AND EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/13/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [MARR](#) [KNNP](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: VISIT OF U/S BURNS TO TURKEY SEPTEMBER 18-20

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Everything has changed since your January visit. A new electoral mandate for PM Erdogan; a new, activist President Gul; a victory for democracy; positive statements on US-Turkey relations and the imperative to push forward on EU accession-related reforms -- real opportunity for progress on a variety of issues that matter to us. And you can help. We still face challenges. Our approval rating has sunk to 7%. Turkey shares our goal of a stable, unitary, democratic Iraq, but is still frustrated about the PKK. A Congressional Armenian genocide resolution looms again. Iran's nuclear ambitions remain of concern, but energy needs are causing Ankara to warm up to Tehran. But the silver lining is a re-invigorated GOT with a fresh mandate is well-positioned to take bold steps. We have to make our relationship with it work. Your visit and those by PM Erdogan and FM Babacan to the UNGA is are key.

How We Can Use Your Visit

¶2. (C) Turkey's elections this year solidified democracy here. Enormous challenges and tensions remain. Your visit is an opportunity early on to underscore our continued support for Turkey's democratic institutions. Post-election, Erdogan made clear his intention to continue to work hard on US-Turkey relations. Scanning the list of complex issues in Turkey's neighborhood -- Iraq, Iran, Syria and the Middle East, terrorism, Afghanistan, the Caucasus, and regional energy/European energy security -- it is clear we will need Turkey's involvement and support. Whatever our problems and disagreements, on the big issues, our countries share the same interests and goals.

¶3. (C) In January, you had the first comprehensive review of our relations under the Shared Vision framework. We have held bilateral policy planning talks, consultations on Central Asia and the Caucasus, and our first-ever exchange about China; continued our Pol-Mil talks through the High Level Defense Group; held a successful meeting of the bilateral Economic Partnership Commission and developed an action plan to guide joint work in this area; and maintained close coordination on Iraq policy, including through consultations involving Amb. Satterfield. Continuing to listen, consult, and support Ankara when possible, including on combating the PKK, will provide essential reassurance that we take Turkey seriously. Your visit, together with high-level meetings on the margins of UNGA, are important early opportunities to accomplish this.

Key Issues

¶4. (C) Iraq: Iraq continues to be the biggest thing going. Turks worry that Iraq may splinter along sectarian and ethnic

lines, leaving it open to Iranian domination. Turkey -- particularly then-FM Gul -- has been instrumental in getting the Iraq Neighbors Process up and running. The GOT, despite doubts about PM Maliki, has ratcheted up support for him and encouraged continued Sunni participation in his coalition. President Gul is likely to reach out to Iraqi President Talabani in the coming weeks -- an important first step in establishing direct senior-level contact between the GOT and Iraqi Kurds. The Turks will be keen to hear how USG strategy may evolve in the wake of Amb. Crocker and Gen. Petraeus' congressional testimony. They will also want to work closely with us to ensure that the next ministerial meeting of the Expanded Neighbors, scheduled for October 31-November 1 in Istanbul, is a success and achieves concrete results, especially on political reconciliation.

¶15. (C) PKK: The US has been Turkey's closest ally in the fight against the PKK, but Turks see only a lack of concrete, visible action against the PKK in northern Iraq. While PKK-related violence has been lower this year than last, still nearly 90 Turkish security forces have been killed. A major explosion in the heart of Ankara in May killed nine civilians and wounded 100, and another was averted on September 11 when police defused a massive car bomb that the national police chief told us is almost certainly the work of the PKK.

¶16. (C) Kurds: Erdogan's new mandate is also an opportunity to work on underlying issues that have produced support for the PKK. We believe this is high on his list of priorities, but it will take political courage and creativity. Two key points: President Gul's first trip is to five cities in the southeast, where he has been touting diversity; and Erdogan just appointed the savvy governor of Diyarbakir to run his Prime Ministry. You should reiterate our continued commitment to helping combat the PKK; note that we continue to urge the Iraqis, including KRG President Massoud Barzani, to end the PKK presence in northern Iraq; and ask what measures the Turks plan to take at home to achieve an overall solution to the Kurdish problem. Direct engagement between the GOT and the KRG must also happen in the near-term.

¶17. (C) Iran: Iran is both a neighbor and a rival. On the one hand, GOT officials claim they regularly convey tough messages to the Iranians on Tehran's nuclear program. On the other, Turkey continues to be receptive to Iranian advances, hopeful that greater mutual dependence will eventually moderate Tehran's behavior. Turkey has warmed to a dialogue on gas development for three reasons: huge increases in domestic energy demand on the horizon; EU desire for alternate gas supplies; and Turkey's strategic transit location. Iranian military action against PKK-affiliated targets in northern Iraq further bolsters relations. You should tell the Turks what we see as next steps in international efforts to bring Iran into compliance with UNSC resolutions. You should also urge that Turkey remain firm in pressing the Iranians to do the same and not send mixed messages.

¶18. (C) Middle East: Turks have a vested interest in developments throughout the region and believe they should have a role to play. Turkey maintains its contingent of 900 troops in UNIFIL, PM Olmert visited Ankara in February and the Israelis reached out to the Turks in an attempt to establish dialogue with the Syrians earlier in the year. The Turkish offer to host a Middle East peace conference stands, and they will want to hear both how the USG envisages bringing the President's plan to fruition, as well as what, if any, role they may be able to play. The GOT continues to increase its engagement with Syria in the belief that Assad is seeking an alternative to dependence on Iran. You should urge the Turks to continue to press Assad to cease Syrian support for insurgents transiting into Iraq, and to increase efforts to bolster President Abbas and the Palestinian Authority.

¶19. (C) Armenian genocide resolution: The possible Armenian genocide resolution (AGR) hangs like a sword of Damocles over

our bilateral relations. We cannot be certain what retaliatory steps might be taken should it pass, but public opinion will demand action, with possible consequences for support to our operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. You should reassure Turkish officials of the Administration's continued opposition to the resolution, but urge realism and action. You should press the Turks to take an early bold step toward Armenia, but also urge that in the event of passage, any response the Turks take not hinder our ability to cooperate on key, common interests.

¶10. (C) Energy: We have continued to press Turkey to support shipping natural gas from the Caspian to Europe across Turkey as the antidote to Iran, a way to avoid over-dependence on Russia, and to support the smaller, new Caspian states. Azeri gas is available in the short-term. Shipping it to Greece and then Italy via pipelines now nearing completion would help to convince other supplier countries, including Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, that similar deals could be made. While the Turks have moved to lessen their own dependence on Russian gas by possibly engaging Iran to bring both Iranian and Turkmeni gas to Turkey, they remain open to a trans-Caspian deal -- but want to see concrete action. You should urge GOT officials to complete a gas transit agreement with the Azeris, clearing the way for a Turkey-Greece-Italy pipeline and follow-up on PM Erdogan's stated readiness to convene a Turkey-Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan-Kazakhstan summit on trans-Caspian energy transit.

¶11. (C) Nuclear Energy Agreement: Your Turkish interlocutors may inquire about the status of our efforts to ratify the bilateral Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (123) Agreement, which both sides signed in 2000 and which Turkey ratified in ¶2005. Turkish officials cite lack of U.S. ratification of the PUNE as reasons for delays on several bilateral nuclear cooperation projects, including DOE's Sister Labs Program, LEU-HEU fuel conversion, and Turkey's final implementation of our bilateral Nonproliferation Cooperation (EXBS) Agreement. We understand the 123 Agreement package is nearing completion for submission to Congress.

¶12. (C) Cyprus: The Turks remain frustrated with the lack of progress on easing the northern Cypriots' economic isolation. They are also loathe to provide ROC President Papadopoulos a political boost by pressing ahead with a July 8 process which they believe Nicosia wants to use to push off comprehensive settlement talks indefinitely. The AKP will not expend political capital on Cyprus, at least until the ROC presidential election is completed early next year. However, they listened to our entreaties not to allow Papadopoulos to claim the moral high ground, and this may have contributed to Talat's agreement to meet Papadopoulos on September 5. You should urge GOT officials to continue to keep pressure on the Greek Cypriots by giving Talat political space to engage and consider additional steps, such as opening a port to Greek Cypriot shipping that would give moral stature to the case for de-isolating the north. Further bold GOT steps on EU-related reforms -- a priority for both Erdogan and Gul -- can help further. You may want to sound out officials on prospects for resuming talks on a "package" deal that would allow EU acquis chapters to be unfrozen.

¶13. (C) ESDP: The Turks remain frustrated over EU unwillingness to offer Turkey decision-shaping consultation in ESDP missions, wrap up administrative arrangements between Turkey and the European Defense Agency, and conclude a Security Agreement with Turkey. Until the EU addresses Turkey's demands, Ankara will likely continue to impede NATO support of those ESDP missions. The GOT is turning to the U.S. for help in pressuring the EU to act on Turkish demands. Prime Minister Erdogan's July 13 letter to POTUS underscores the high-level attention this issue continues to receive here. We should express our sympathy for Turkey's desires vis-a-vis the EU while cautioning Ankara against jeopardizing EU and NATO efforts in Afghanistan and Kosovo.

¶14. (C) Afghanistan: Turkey has twice successfully led ISAF

and currently commands ISAF-Central in Kabul. The Turks lead one PRT, in Wardak Province, and have pledged \$100 million in assistance over five years. You should thank GOT officials for Turkey's continued strong commitment to Afghanistan's rehabilitation and reconstruction, but press for a reduction to the caveats on the use of its forces there and more help to ISAF, especially helicopters.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON